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SUBJECT: APRIL 29 MFA PRESS BRIEFING: Torch Relay, Dalai Lama, Indonesia Kidnapping, Hu Japan Visit, Visa Policy, Olympics, DPRK FM Visit, Other

11. Key points at the April 29 MFA press briefing were:

-- Chinese students who attended the torch relay in Seoul intended to defend the dignity of the torch.

-- China's willingness to meet with the Dalai Lama's representatives shows China's "consistent policy" and "forgiveness."

-- Seven Chinese citizens were kidnapped in Indonesia and one has been released.

-- President Hu's May 6-10 visit to Japan will promote "mutual trust" and "pragmatic cooperation"

-- China's visa policy is in line with international practice.

-- China's Olympic preparations are nearly complete and the security situation stable though there is a risk of terrorist attacks.

Chinese Students at Seoul Torch Relay

12. At the April 29, 2008 regular MFA press briefing, MFA Spokesperson Jiang Yu said the Olympic torch was welcomed by overseas Chinese and South Koreans when it passed through Seoul. Some who attempted to disrupt the relay were prevented from doing so by the actions of Chinese citizens. Jiang expressed China's "solicitude" to South Korean policemen who were injured. Pressed on why China would not condemn the violence, Jiang said journalists should look at the nature of the incident. According to Jiang, students who wished to "uphold justice" went to the torch relay to "defend the dignity of the torch." Jiang drew a contrast between "the Tibetan separatist forces" who "intended to disrupt the relay, violating the Olympic spirit and the concept of peace and friendship" and the Chinese students who "proceeded from goodwill and coexist harmoniously with local people." Jiang said China requests that Chinese abide by local laws when abroad.

13. Jiang denied that the Chinese Embassy organized Chinese citizens to defend the torch, saying they attended the event "spontaneously."

China to Meet with Dalai Lama Representatives

14. Jiang did not offer any details about a meeting between China and representatives of the Dalai Lama, referring reporters to "relevant internal authorities." Jiang emphasized that the Chinese Government's contact with the Dalai Lama is entirely an internal affair. China's willingness to meet with the Dalai Lama's representatives shows China's "consistent policy" and "forgiveness." China and the Chinese people will never yield to external pressure on issues of security and territorial integrity. A decision to meet with the Dalai Lama's representatives is "absolutely not" a result of external pressure.

15. Jiang had no information on reports that 17 people were sentenced

for their participation in the Tibet riots, saying only that the government handled the incident in accordance with law.

¶16. Asked when foreign journalists would be allowed to visit Tibet, Jiang said it was necessary and natural to resume tourism to Tibet and that information would be released in due course.

Seven Chinese Kidnapped in Indonesia

¶17. Jiang confirmed that seven Chinese citizens were kidnapped in Indonesia and that one has been released. China asked Indonesia to do its utmost to rescue the hostages and take effective measures to ensure the safety of Chinese citizens in Indonesia.

Hu Jintao to Visit Japan

¶18. Jiang announced that President Hu will visit Japan May 6-10. Hu will meet Emperor Akihito, PM Fukuda and have "extensive contact with Japanese leaders from the Diet and people from various walks of life." Jiang said the improvement in China-Japan relations is in the fundamental interests of the two countries and is conducive to peace and stability in Asia and the world at large. China's goals are to enhance mutual trust and pragmatic cooperation and increase people-to-people exchanges. When asked about the East China Sea dispute, Jiang said the issue is sensitive and both sides are making progress. China is "willing to work together with Japan to find a resolution acceptable to both sides." On whether the most recent revelations of more tainted dumplings would be discussed, Jiang said "no possibility should be ruled out" and China hopes both sides can "increase cooperation."

China's Visa Policy "Convenient"

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¶19. Jiang said China's visa policy is in line with international practice and is convenient. China may require some materials, such as hotel confirmation and an invitation letter, but normal visits will not be affected.

Olympics

¶10. Asked how China felt it was doing on its Olympic promises to improve human rights, press freedoms and environmental protection, Jiang said the reporter was brining up issues that are not relevant to the Olympics. China has made "remarkable progress" on human rights and guarantees all citizens the "right to development." Jiang said preparations for the Olympics are nearly complete. The security situation for the Olympics is "basically stable," though there is a risk of terrorist attacks. Security is the number one priority of the Chinese Government and preparations are being made to ensure a safe Olympics, said Jiang.

Darfur

¶11. Asked whether she had a message for Mia Farrow, Jiang asked journalists to let Farrow know what China has done for Darfur. China supports the "tripartite and double track" proposals and has made efforts to resolve the problem even though it is not a "Chinese issue." Jiang encouraged activists to concentrate on European governments.

DPRK FM Visit to China

¶12. DPRK FM Pak Ui Chun met with China FM Yang Jiechi April 28 to discuss the Six-Party Talks. Jiang said the recent negotiations between the United States and the DPRK were "helpful." China hopes to continue exchanges with relevant parties to complete phase two and push the talks to the next chapter.

China-Pakistan Relations

¶13. Jiang said she did not have information about specific agreements reached during FM Yang's visit to Pakistan. She characterized China-Pakistan relations as an "all weather friendship" and "cooperative partnership." China appreciates Pakistan's firm support on issues of sovereignty.

Human Rights Watch "Prejudiced"

¶14. Jiang had not seen a Human Rights Watch report about difficulties faced by human rights lawyers in China. Jiang said the organization is "prejudiced and disregards facts." Human Rights Watch is always critical of China yet Chinese citizens enjoy rights, she stated.

German Interior Minister Visit

¶15. German Interior Minister Wolfgang Schaeuble visited China April 28-29. While in China, Schaeuble signed agreements on sports cooperation and met Chinese security officials.

Barbados PM Visit, Iranian Nuclear Talks

¶16. Barbados Prime Minister David Thompson will visit China May 5-9. AFM He Yafei will represent FM Yang Jiechi at the May 2 P5 plus 1 talks on the Iranian nuclear issue.

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